

JEFFERSON AS A LAW-GIVER.

Jefferson's interest in the affairs of Congress could not crowd out his interest in the affairs of his own State. Virginia, and not the United States., was as yet his country. When the Convention declared for independence it took steps to provide for a form of government for the new order of things. While Jefferson was in Philadelphia working- on the great document that has secured his fame, he found time to prepare outlines of a Constitution for the new Virginia. He sent his plan to. the President of the Convention, but it arrived too< late. The construction of a new Constitution had already proceeded so far that it was not deemed wise to. go back and open up for debate matters that had been agreed upon by the assembly after long discussion. Jefferson's preamble, however, written in the spirit of, and bearing a strong similitude to, the Declaration of Independence, was adopted as an amendment and prefixed to the new Constitution.

We have .seen that Jefferson was re-elected to Congress in June, 1776, but in September he resigned his seat, claiming at the time that the situation of his domestic affairs demanded this step. In the memoir of his life, written in 1820, he gives an entirely different reason for leaving Congress. He there says: "A meeting of the (Virginia) legislature was to be held in October and I had been elected a member by my county. I knew that our legislation under the regal government had many very vicious points which urgently required reformation, and I thought I could be of more use in forwarding that." Whatever his motives have been, whatever the true reason was, he vacated his seat in Congress and entered the Virginia legislature.

About this time (October, 1776) Jefferson was selected by Congress to go to France with Franklin and Silas Deane, for the purpose of effecting a treaty of alliance. It was the dream of his youth to visit Europe. The cause of his ill-success in his first love affair has been attributed to. the fact that he asked